THE THIRD DAY.

19th February 1919.

The Assembly met 12 noon on Wednesday, the 19th February 1919.

19. The Forest Department—its present administration, working and yield—and suggestions for its better working.

Mr. A. K. Govindan Channar (Member, Nominated) said that the forests formed the capital wealth of the State and that any attempts made to produce revenue at the sacrifice of the capital wealth should be discountenanced. That the Forest Department of Travancore was being worked under the abovesaid method, especially during the past 2 or 3 years, was the general impression prevalent in the country. The officers of the department should be guided by a sense of future requirements and should have enough far-sightedness to look far ahead. To look into the question of how much revenue could be obtained, to see how the revenue could be enhanced, to make the forests useful to the people and to institute an exhaustive enquiry into the evils that had come into existence in the administration of the department, it was highly necessary to appoint a Committee composed of officials and non-officials who should submit their report to Government. The system of coupe sales as carried on at present was a subject of considerable hardship to the people. The people of the country were not able to get timber for building purposes, because of the exploitation of timber under the coupe sale system by foreigners. The Member also complained that such sales were not being held after due publicity. The necessity for the cultivation of food crops in the State being great and the need for habitations being equally pressing, reserves in the midst or vicinity of inhabited localities should be thrown open for registry. All *eta* forests and swamps within reserved forests should be given for cultivation as before to applicants. Formerly, such marshy lands used to be cultivated with paddy and the poor ryots were getting a good yield also. When such lands were assigned for cultivation, they should be placed under the control of the Director of Agriculture. The means of communications in the forests should be improved so as to enable the controlling officers of the department to go into the interior forests and check the work of their subordinates. Scientific methods should be employed for felling trees and transporting them. Proper Working Plans should be prepared. It was in view to remove the above evils and to rid the department of administrative and other defects that a Committee was suggested. He requested that early action might be taken to constitute a Committee as proposed by him.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

20. Influence of indiscriminate disafforestation on rain and its effect on moisture and surface springs.

Mr. S. P. Kuttalalingam Pillai (Member, T. I. C., Shencottah) said that the Shencottah taluk was being irrigated by three streams, the Kundar, Hariharanadi and the Hanumannadi which took their source from that part of the Puliyara reserve which forms the outer slope of the Travancore Hills. The outer slope alone formed the entire catchment area of the rivers. Out of the 16 square miles which was the total area of the Puliyara Reserve, about two-thirds fell under the basin of the rivers. The arable lands under wet cultivation depended solely upon the catchment area for the water needed for their irrigation. The policy of Government should, therefore, be the strict conservation of the forest forming the catchment area. The policy of the department during the past 50 years had not, however, been conducive to the preservation of the basin of the rivers. The indiscriminate denudation of the forests was allowed in the past by the introduction of the permit system. That system was, however, stopped not long ago, but a more destructive form of exploitation had been let in recently by the introduction of the coupe

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